Bureau of Land Management 220 E. Market Street • Meeker, Colorado 81641 BLM WHITE RIVER NEWS

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BLM to gather wild horses in northwest Colorado

MEEKER, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management plans to gather excess wild horses in the White River Field Office in northwest Colorado as early as September 2015. The BLM will gather up to 167 horses using water and bait trapping and helicopter gather operations to sustain healthy public lands and wild horse populations.

Maintaining healthy herd populations is a key aspect in the BLM's multiple-use mission to manage public lands for a variety of natural resources and a sustained yield. When wild horse herds grow at levels that are unsustainable for local resources, the ecological balance of these areas is altered and can impact plant and animal species on the range. The BLM has determined that current wild horse populations south of Rangely pose a serious and potentially permanent risk to the area's ecological balance.

The horses in the West Douglas herd became isolated from the larger Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area to the east when construction of the State Highway 139 right-of-way fences created a physical barrier to movement between the herds. The BLM decided to remove the wild horses from West Douglas through various public planning efforts since 1975, including the 1997 White River Resource Management Plan and a 2005 RMP amendment. The West Douglas Herd Area currently has 365 horses, which is not sustainable for the area. The Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area currently has 377 wild horses, but its appropriate management level is between 135 and 235 wild horses.

The BLM evaluated several alternatives in conjunction with scientific data, range-specific conditions and public input through a formal environmental analysis. The planning documents evaluating the planned gather operations are available at the White River Field Office at 220 E. Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 and online at: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/wrfo_wild_horses.html

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